

Message Text

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EXDISS

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SUBJECT: REFUGEES FROM SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

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1. WE APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S AWARENESS OF SOME OF THE
COMPLEXITIES IMPOSED BY THE ISSUES RAISED IN REFTEL. OUR COMMENTS
ARE BELOW.

2. QUITE CLEARLY WE SHOULD AVOID PUTTING OURSELVES IN A POSITION
OF CONDONING, MUCH LESS ABETTING, THE ILLEGAL DEPARTURE OF VIETNAMESE
CITIZENS AT THIS TIME. WE HAVE TAKEN GREAT CARE HERE IN MAKING IT
ABSOLUTELY CLEAR TO MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY
AS WELL AS TO THE PRESS THAT WE WOULD NOT ASSIST IN ANY ATTEMPTS TO
VIOLATE OR CIRCUMVENT VIETNAMESE LAW AND PROCEDURES AND ASSIST IN
ILLEGAL DEPARTURES OF THEIR LOCAL EMPLOYEES. MOST OF THOSE WHO HAVE
RAISED THE SUBJECT WITH US HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE REASON AND ACCEPTED
THAT POSITION. OBVIOUSLY FOR THE US GOVERNMENT OR ITS REPRESENTATIVES
HERE TO ASSIST IN SUCH ILLEGAL DEPARTURES WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE
COOPERATION OF THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES WHICH WE ABSOLUTELY MUST
HAVE TO ENABLE THE DEPARTURE OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AND THEIR IMMEDIATE
FAMILIES, MANY OF WHOM ARE VIETNAMESE.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS THOSE LISTED IN PARA 3
OF REFTEL, HAVING ONCE LEFT THE COUNTRY EVEN ILLEGALLY, THERE IS NO
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PARTICULAR POINT IN BEING VINDICTIVE OR MAKING SOME SORT OF EFFORT

TO RETURN THEM AGAINST THEIR WILL. IN SOME CASES SUCH AS THOSE IN
SUBPARASH1 THRU 5 OF PARA 3 THE US GOVERNMENT HAS AN OBLIGATION
TO THE INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED. CONSIDERING THE ABOVE WE BELIEVE THAT
ON

BALANCE WE SHOULD GIVE QUIET ASSISTANCE TO THOSE INDIVIDUALS FOR
WHOM THE US HAS SOME SORT OF OBLIGATION. THIS INCLUDES THOSE NOW
EMPLOYED BY US, CLOSE RELATIVES OF US CITIZENS, THIRD COUNTRY
NATIONALS EMPLOYED BY US, AND FORMER VIETNAMESE EMPLOYEES OF
INTELLIGENCE AS WELL AS OTHER AGENCIES. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT
PERSONS IN THESE CATEGORIES BE PROVIDED SOME ASSISTANCE IF THEY ARE
DESTITUTE AND THAT WE EVEN GO AS FAR AS TO HELP THEM GO TO THE
UNITED STATES IF THEY WANT TO. HOWEVER, ALL OF THIS SHOULD BE
DONE QUIETLY AND CERTAINLY WITHOUT ANY PUBLICITY.

4. AS FAR AS THE OTHER TWO CATEGORIES ARE CONCERNED (SUBPARAS
6 AND 7 OF PARA 3 OF REFTTEL) WE HAVE SOME DOUBTS. WHILE WE CAN
UNDERSTAND AND SYMPATHIZE WITH THE PANIC, LARGELY INDUCED BY
AMERICAN MEDIA REPORTING, SENIOR GVN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS
WHO HAVE ILLEGALLY DEPARTED THEIR COUNTRY NOW THAT IT IS IN A TIME
OF CRISIS SHOULD NOT APPPEAR TO BE REWARDED BY USG BY RECEIVING
ASSISTANCE FROM US AT THIS TIME. WHILE A NORMAL SENSE OF MERCY
AND COMPASSION WOULD DICTATE THAT WE HELP WHERE THERE IS A REAL
NEED, AND WE ASSUME THIS WILL BE DONE, THE FACT THAT PERSONS HAVE
BEEN US EDUCATED DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THEY HAVE A PARTICULAR CLAIM
FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE US IF THEY HAVE ILLEGALLY LEFT THEIR COUNTRY
IN TIME OF CRISIS. IF REAL NEED EXISTS, OUR HELP SHOULD BE DONE
WITHOUT ANY KIND OF PUBLICITY. EMPLOYEES OF US COMPANIES AND
VOLUNTARY
AGENCIES WHO HAVE DONE SO SHOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THEIR
FORMER EMPLOYERS, AND WE ASSUME FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THEIR
EMPLOYERS THAT THEY WILL ASSUME THIS OBLIGATION.

5. GENERAL, WE BELIEVE THAT EXCEPT FOR THOSE INDIVIDUALS FOR
WHOM THE US GOVERNMENT HAS A CERTAIN OBLIGATION AND OTHERS WHO ARE
DESTITUTE AND MUST HAVE SOME IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE WE SHOULD
PROCEED SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY AT THIS TIME AND, ABOVE ALL, RESIST
OUR NORMAL COMPULSION FOR PUBLICITY.
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